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# FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

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## POLITICAL

Eastern Constitutional Crisis (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Eastern Regional House of Assembly was convened by Governor Sir Clement PLEASS on April 19 in an extraordinary session to consider a supplementary appropriation bill restoring the positions and salaries which the House had excised. (See D-162, April 15, 1955). Although the House declined to debate or vote upon the Governor's bill, under the Governor's Reserve powers the bill automatically becomes law.

Attended by only a handful of members, the short session was monopolized by Premier AZIKIWE, who presented a carefully-worded excoriation of Governor Pleass and Colonial Secretary LENNOX-BOYD's statements and actions in the dispute. Zik admitted that the Governor had won his point but stated that in doing so he had employed a method "alien to the spirit of democracy", and hinted that the affair was not concluded by saying, "It will be for consideration whether the privilege of the House will be violated by an act of this nature which may be tantamount to a deprivation of this parliamentary body of the rights guaranteed to it by the Constitution."

Shortly after the Eastern House had adjourned sine die, Chief Whip E.O. EYO submitted a motion of no confidence in the Governor. The motion, which was to have been presented at the next House session scheduled for May 11, will lapse since Mr. Eyo has departed on an inspection trip in the U.K. In an editorial column of the NCNC Pilot, however, it has been reported that the motion may be resubmitted by another party member.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Although most Lagos political officers with Eastern experience believe that the affair will blow over, during his recent visit to Lagos to confer with Federal officials here Sir Clem admitted that he was worried.

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In the early stages of the dispute the Action Group refrained, comment, thereby indicating its unwillingness to support the British position in a controversy affecting Regional powers and Nigerianization. After it became clear that Pleass would not compromise his position, however, the AG press opened fire on Zik, declaring that his "arbitrary and irresponsible" action had endangered the peaceful resolution of differences in constitutional interpretation.

Ibadan Commission of Inquiry (UNCLASSIFIED)

Meanwhile, the AG Western Regional Government stirred up a hornet's nest by announcing that a Commission of Inquiry would investigate the operations of the NCNC-controlled Ibadan Town Council. D.M.O. AKINBIYI, the Outspoken young Town Clerk of the Lagos Town Council, was appointed Sole Commissioner. Following the latter's appointment, Federal Minister of Natural Resources and Social Services, Adegoki ADELABU, who continues to retain his position as chairman of the Ibadan Town Council, declared that because of Akinbiyi's "obvious AG sympathies", the Council would boycott the commission and would give no voluntary evidence. To further confuse the issue, the Council established an investigation of its own to look into the allegedly illegal actions of the traditional chiefs who sit on the Council (most of whom are AG supporters).

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Unlike the investigations of local government bodies at Onitsha and Port Harcourt in the Eastern Region (See D-126, p.2, Feb. 28, 1955), the Town Council will not be dissolved but will continue operating during the Commission's investigation. There is little doubt that the Commissioner will uncover ample evidence of wrong doing by the Council; it is less clear whether any report can calm the highly-charged political tension between the opposition local government body and the Western Regional Government.

NCNC Convention (UNCLASSIFIED)

The NCNC's National Executive Committee and general party convention is scheduled to meet in Ibadan May 2 through 7.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

The meeting promises to be a stormy one. In addition to consideration of controversial appointments to top party positions (e.g., that of Chief Gogo ABBEY: See D-126, p.3, Feb. 28, 1955), the Executive Committee will probably advocate some method of silencing or removing members of the "radical wing" who have criticized party policy. The convention will undoubtedly debate a resolution concerning the Eastern constitutional dispute.

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Arrival of New Governor General (UNCLASSIFIED)

It has been announced that Governor General Sir James ROBERTSON will arrive in Nigeria on May 15. He will take over his duties on that date from the Officer Administering the Government, Sir Hugo MARSHALL.

Sardauna's Pilgrimage (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Honorable AHMADU, Sardauna of Sokoto and Premier of the Northern Region, accompanied by the Emir of Kano, Alhadji Muhammadu SANUSSI, and other Northern officials, has returned from his visit to Mecca (D-147, p.4, March 18, 1955). In Tripoli and Jidda the Sardauna and his party discussed with local officials the problem of facilitating the travel of Nigerian pilgrims.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Libyan and Egyptian officials apparently accorded the Northern Premier a "red carpet" reception. Aside from the obvious cultural and religious ties of Islaam, Nigeria's Northern Region is economically important to Moslem countries to the Northeast because of the large number of Nigerian pilgrims (unofficially estimated to approach 12,000 per year) who make the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Bye-Elections to Eastern Regional House (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Eastern opposition gained two seats in the Eastern House in seven bye-elections resulting from seats vacated by former members now in the Federal House. The NCNC won five seats (three of which were uncontested), the Action Group one (the Ogoja Division seat formerly held by Minister MBU), and the UNIP one. Party alignment in the Eastern House now shows NCNC - 72, UNIP - 10, AG - 1.

Nigerian Reaction to Bandung Conference (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Nigerian press accorded the Afro-Asian Conference more space than is usually given to extra-Nigerian affairs. Most of the plan was restricted to Reuter's despatches, but the Pilot, the NCNC's press outlet, editorially endorsed Ceylon's Sir John KOTELAWALA's resolution that both imperialistic and communistic colonialism should be recognized as dangerous. The editor declared that he did not "consider the conference communistic-inspired" and hoped that the next meeting would include "Africa's largest and most important Negro state" among the participants.

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Okotie-Eboh Accuses Action Group (UNCLASSIFIED)

The NCNC's Festus Sam OKOTIE-EBOH, Federal Minister of Labor and Welfare, representing the Western Region, denounced the West's AG Government in a press release. The Minister declared that self-government under Action Group leadership "would immediately reduce Nigeria into a totaletarian state...on the same level as those behind the Iron Curtain".

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

While even more vitriolic statements were commonplace during the Federal House's recent budget session, expatriate and Northern members of the Council of Ministers are understandably worried over the present inclination of NCNC Ministers Adelabu and Okotie-Eboh to issue unconsidered partisan political statements and to take an active part in NCNC-AG verbal skirmishes.

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## EDUCATION

### West African Examinations Council (UNCLASSIFIED)

The third annual meeting of the West African Examinations Council recently was held in Accra under the chairmanship of Dr. J. T. SAUNDERS, Principal of the University College, Ibadan. Representatives of the University of London Institute of Education, and the University of the Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate attended the meeting which was primarily concerned with implementing a policy whereby the West African Council will assume increasing responsibility for examining secondary school graduates according to the standard of the parent U.K. bodies.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Both British and African educational leaders are concerned lest political pressure will cause too early a transfer of examination responsibility, resulting in British refusal to recognize West African educational certificates.

Observers of the present West African educational set-up, including the International Bank Mission, have charged that the schools over-emphasize the purely academic qualifications required for the Cambridge and London certificates, to the detriment of the technical or applied skills so sorely needed in the area.

### Results of Secondary School Examinations (UNCLASSIFIED)

Results of the Nigerian secondary school examinations are set forth below. The Eastern and Western Regions supplied the bulk of the students examined, while the Northern Region provided less than 5% of the Nigerian total.

| Region | No. of Applicants | No. of Failures | Percentage of Passes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cameroons | 48 | 2 | 92% |
| Lagos (Federal) | 282 | 58 | 78% |
| Northern Region | 117 | 26 | 78% |
| Western Region | 984 | 233 | 75% |
| Eastern Region | 1037 | 305 | 70% |
| Total | 2468 | 624 | 73.5% |

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

Only 8% of the 2,468 entries were feminine. The figures take no account of absentees or applicants who withdrew during the course of the examinations.

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## LABOR

### Cameroons Establishes Civil Service Board (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Leader of Government Business in the Southern Cameroons, Dr. E.M.L. ENDELEY, has announced the establishment of a Civil Service Advisory Board with responsibility for the appointment and promotion of senior and junior members of the region's civil service.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

According to the Federal Constitution, the Southern Cameroons was to share the same civil service with the Federal Government. The Governor-General, however, acquiesced in the Cameroons' request that it have a separate civil service.

### Nigerian Participation at ILO Conference (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Federal Minister of Labor and Welfare, Chief Festus Okotie-Eboh, announced during a speech to the Railway Technical Staff Association Union that Nigeria will send a "full delegation" to the thirty-eighth International Labor Conference to be held at Geneva in June 1955. The Minister stated that Government, employers, and workers will be represented on the Nigerian delegation.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

After onsulting the Regions, the Federal Government accepted the ILO's invitation to participate as an observer. As customarily happens when Nigerian delegations to international conferences are considered, the question has arisen as to how the various Regions can be adequately represented in a small delegation.

### Safety Legislature for Nigerian Factories (UNCLASSIFIED)

In a speech to union representatives, the Federal Minister of Labor and Welfare promised that legislation establishing minimum safety standards for Nigerian factories would be introduced during the next meeting of the Federal Legislature.

COMMENT (UNCLASSIFIED)

There are no such requirements presently in Nigerian law.

## ECONOMIC

### Oil Exploration (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Shell D'Arcy Petroleum company has announced that some oil and gas have been encountered at Ekim in Calabar Province in the Eastern Region. The announcement stated that the new shows are larger than the indications found in any of the other wells so far drilled in Nigeria and are considered encouraging. (See ConGen Despatch No. 142 , March 15 , 1955). It emphasized, however, that they are still not sufficient for production purposes. Further tests at other depths of the well will be carried out and more wells will be drilled in the area.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

There appears to be a belief, widely held by Nigerians that oil has been found in large quantities and the knowledge of it is being withheld by the developing company for ulterior purposes. One recent rumor had it that an underground pipeline has been built out to sea where tank ships come to load at night. In reporting the story of Shell D'Arcy's recent announcement, the West African Pilot stated, "There is every indication that before long, the East will be flowing with oil and money --". An editorial in another paper hinted that the production of oil would begin after Nigeria attained self-government.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Port Development - Port Harcourt (UNCLASSIFIED)

The Ports Authority has approved plans for the extension and construction of additional wharf facilities at Port Harcourt. The scheme reportedly calls for a 1500 foot extension of the existing wharf, the erection of three new transit sheds, additional warehouse facilities for export produce, and the improvement of railroad and road facilities. It is estimated that the scheme will cost about £3.25 million. Tenders have not yet been called.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Traffic at Port Harcourt, Nigeria's second most important port, has been badly congested for a number of years. It is important, not only as the major port of the Eastern Region, but because it also serves the eastern portion of the Northern Region and Fort Lamey in French Chad. Because of its physical limitations, it probably will never become a truly efficient port. Its site was chosen because it affords the closest area of stable ground to the sea on the Bonny River. As the west bank of the river is swamp, the port area is confined to the east bank. The port area itself is limited to a narrow strip of land between the river and an abruptly rising hill. Upon completion of the planned facilities it is doubtful if



further

further expansion can take place without extensive land reclamation.

Port Development - Koko (UNCLASSIFIED)

It is reported that £25,000 has been set aside for an engineering survey to investigate the feasibility of developing Koko on the Benin River as a Federal port.

## CIVIL AVIATION

WAAC Equipment (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Since the fatal crash of a Bristol Wayfarer in January, WAAC has been operating on limited schedules with 3 chartered DC-3s and 3 DeHavilland Doves. Following modification (it is understood of the wing structure), one Wayfarer is expected to resume operation by the first week in May, and one possibly in June. WAAC has purchased a number of Herons and hopes eventually to have 5 in operation. Flight tests are now being carried out locally with a Heron and the first one may commence operating by the end of May. One DC-3 was returned to the U.K. on May 1. The others will be returned as soon as they can be replaced by Herons. When all planes are operative WAAC will apparently have 5 Herons, 2 Wayfarers, and 3 Doves, plus 1 Dove for survey work.

Crash of French Plane (UNCLASSIFIED)

The press announced on April 27 that a French passenger plane flying from Kano to Duala, French Cameroons had been missing since April 19 and that a search was being made in the Cameroons Mountains. So far as can be ascertained the plane has not been found.

COMMENT (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

According to unofficial reports the plane was a Heron, the same model that is soon to become the mainstay of WAAC. It is interesting to note that in the press reports the plane was not identified. There is some presumption that the plane may have been lost at sea as it is understood that an otherwise unexplained oil slick was sighted off the Cameroons coast.

Cameroons Banana Crop Damage (UNCLASSIFIED)

Unusually heavy storms have caused unprecedented damage to banana crop in the Southern Cameroons. It is estimated that about 2¼ million stems have been destroyed so far this year. This is higher than has previously been experienced in an entire year. Damage to plantations is also severe.

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British Industrial Mission (UNCLASSIFIED)

Sir Percival J. GRIFFITHS and Mr. Maurice J. WATT completed their visit to Nigeria on behalf of the Federation of British Industries on April 22. Prior to their departure they indicated that they had been impressed by the size of the Nigerian market, the availability of the reserves of labor, the existence of important raw materials and the optimistic spirit of the people. Among difficulties to be overcome they pointed out an almost complete lack of industrial and technical experience, the fact that Nigerians, accustomed to the quick returns of trade are not investment minded, a somewhat unrealistic attitude in certain quarters towards foreign capital, the inadequacy of communications and the uncertainities of the political and administrative future. They stated that the primary aim of their visit has been to make an objective assessment of the factors favorable and unfavorable to economic development of Nigeria as well as the part which Britain can play in the process.

For the Consul General:

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